

Chief, Intelligence Information Staff, OTR
THRU : Chief, Services Division
Chief, Trade Branch

2 September 1955

Requirement for Information From American Embassy, Bangkok Post.

Reference: State Despatch Bangkok #559, 9 June 1955. Secret.

1. The above despatch contains several references to smuggled opium: on page 6 reference is made to the Embassy attempt to estimate the illegal trade in gold and opium; page 11 has a reference to opium smuggling into Thailand; and on page 12 reference is made to the illegal re-export of gold in payment for opium which comes from either Burma or Yunnan.

2. The Embassy indicates that it was not possible to make precise estimates of volume of gold and opium smuggling as of 8 June 1955. Furthermore it is not clear from the phrase in the referenced despatch "opium ----from either Burma or Yunnan" whether evidence exists that opium is smuggled into Thailand from Communist China.

3. It is requested that the Embassy furnish as promptly as possible information on the smuggling of opium into Thailand. We are particularly interested in the following aspects of this question:

(a) Is there evidence that opium smuggling into Thailand from Yunnan takes place with the active aid of the Communist Chinese government?

(b) If so, what are the brand names, form of opium, estimated quantities, routes, groups involved, methods of operation, payments:

(c) What estimate of foreign exchange on gold earnings obtained by Communist China from such trade could be made?

4. It is realized that all of the above questions can never be definitely answered, however, qualitative types of answers reflecting the judgement of the Embassy would be appreciated.

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